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EXDIS - MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

NEW DELHI FOR CODEL MCHUGH

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PREL, MASS, JO, US
 SUBJECT: (U) CODEL MCHUGH MEETING WITH CINC LT GEN
 BIN SHAKER AND JAF OFFICERS JANUARY 8

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: CONGRESSMEN MATTHEW MCHUGH (D-NY) AND WILLIAM LEHMAN (D-FLA), ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR VIETS AND DATT/MAP CHIEF, COLONEL JOHN BUBON, AS WELL AS STAFFERS POWERS AND SCHUERCH, CALLED ON JORDAN ARMED FORCES (JAF) COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, LT GENERAL BIN SHAKER, AT 0845 HOURS ON JANUARY 8 IN ADVANCE OF JAF BRIEFING FOR ENTIRE CODEL. PRESENT WITH LTG BIN SHAKER WERE MAJOR GENERALS LOZI, ZA'ROUR AND KAKISH. THE MEETING FOCUSED ON THE JOINT LOGISTICS PROGRAM WITH BIN SHAKER OUTLINING THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF JLP AND EMPHASIZING THAT THIS PROGRAM WAS DEVELOPED WITH THE COMMON U.S.-JORDAN INTERESTS IN MIND. HE STRESSED THAT UNDER THE SCOPE OF THE JLP JORDAN DOES NOT EXPECT THE U.S. TO FIGHT ANY BATTLE IN THE GULF REGION, ONLY TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION AND NECESSARY EQUIPMENT. BIN SHAKER ALSO CONVEYED SOME OF KING HUSSEIN'S POLICIES ON MAJOR REGIONAL ISSUES TO THE CONGRESSMEN. THE GROUP THEN JOINED THE REMAINDER OF THE CODEL. RECEIVING A JAF BRIEFING FOLLOWED BY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS DURING WHICH BIN SHAKER STRESSED THE MILITARY BUILDUP AND THREAT FROM SYRIA AND EMPHASIZED JORDAN'S NEED FOR AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING F-16 AIRCRAFT, ADDITIONAL HAWK MISSILE SYSTEMS, AND LOW-LOOKING RADAR. END SUMMARY.

3. GENERAL BIN SHAKER OPENED THE PRIVATE MEETING BY REFERRING TO A CONVERSATION THE PREVIOUS EVENING DURING

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KING HUSSEIN'S DINNER FOR THE CODEL AND STATED THAT "ALTHOUGH YOU TOLD HIS MAJESTY THAT YOU UNDERSTAND AND WERE SYMPATHETIC TO JORDAN'S PROBLEMS, YOU QUALIFIED THIS WITH A VERY LARGE 'BUT'." "WHY," ASKED BIN SHAKER, "IS THIS THE CASE?" MCHUGH RESPONDED THAT MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAD TO BE SENSITIVE TO THEIR CONSTITUENCIES AND HE WANTED TO BE COMPLETELY STRAIGHTFORWARD WITH THE KING.

4. BIN SHAKER SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY SOME OF THE KING'S POLICIES ON MAJOR REGIONAL ISSUES. FOR EXAMPLE, JORDAN HAD ALWAYS BEEN IN THE FOREFRONT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM AND THE CONDEMNATION OF TERRORISM. IT HAD TO PUT UP A STRONG FIGHT IN THIS COUNTRY, AND EVENTUALLY SUCCEEDED. WHILE TERRORISTS WERE BEING WELCOMED AND HONORED IN OTHER ARAB CAPITALS, THE KING ALONE STOOD UP IN 1972 AND CONDEMNED THE MASSACRES AT MUNICH.

5. IN THE PEACE PROCESS, KING HUSSEIN WAS THE MOST PROMINENT HEAD OF STATE TO ACCEPT EVERY SERIOUS INITIATIVE FOR PEACE. BUT JORDAN WAS SEEKING A PEACE IT COULD LIVE WITH AND SELL TO ITS PEOPLE. IT COULD NOT ACCEPT THE TYPE OF PEACE OFFERED BY A VICTOR OVER THE VANQUISHED. THEREFORE, THE KING NEEDED THE SUPPORT OF THE PALESTINIANS IN HIS SEARCH FOR PEACE. JORDAN'S POLICY IS BASED ON RESOLUTION 242, WHICH KING HUSSEIN HELPED DRAFT.

6. MCHUGH SAID THAT BY NOT JOINING THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS KING HUSSEIN HAD CREATED A BAD IMAGE FOR HIMSELF, BUT NOW WE WERE INTO A NEW PROCESS. GENERAL BIN SHAKER SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT CONGRESSMEN WORRIED ABOUT THE OPINIONS OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS AND PLACED GREAT RELIANCE ON POLLS, YET AMERICANS SEEM TO LACK APPRECIATION THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS ALSO HAVE TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES AS WELL. CONGRESSMAN LEHMAN INTERJECTED THAT IT WAS NOT ONLY THE CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL THAT JORDAN SHOULD TALK TO, BUT ALSO THE JEWISH LEADERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES THAT TRIES TO INFLUENCE CONGRESS. MCHUGH CONTINUED THAT WHILE CONSTITUENT VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT, THOUGHTFUL CONGRESSMEN ALSO HAD TO CONSIDER THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY EVEN IF THEY DID NOT CATER TO PUBLIC OPINION.

7. GENERAL BIN SHAKER POINTED OUT THAT IT IS ISRAELI POLICY TO CONVINCE THE UNITED STATES THAT THEY ARE THE ONLY TRUE FRIENDS OF THE U.S. IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THIS IS NOT SO. JORDAN IS AMONG THE BEST FRIENDS OF THE U.S. IN THIS AREA AT A TIME WHEN IT IS NOT POPULAR TO BE SO. SAUDI ARABIA AND MANY OF THE GULF STATES AND SOME NORTH

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AFRICAN STATES ARE ALSO FRIENDLY TO THE U.S.

8. MCHUGH SAID THAT IN THE LIGHT OF ISRAELI OBJECTIONS, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO SUPPORT ANY INITIATIVES ON BEHALF OF JORDAN SUCH AS THE JOINT LOGISTICS PROGRAM (JLP) SINCE NO INITIATIVE WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY CONGRESS. UNLESS THERE IS STRONG ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT, THERE WILL BE NO BACKING FOR

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PROGRAMS TO BENEFIT JORDAN.

9. GENERAL BIN SHAKER THEN OUTLINED THE HISTORIC BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF JLP POINTING OUT THAT AS EARLY AS 1961 JORDAN HAD DISPATCHED TROOPS TO KUWAIT TO HELP THWART AN IRAQI TAKEOVER. FOR SEVERAL YEARS JORDAN HAS SENT MILITARY TRAINERS AND ADVISERS TO THE GULF AS WELL AS TRAINING GULF MILITARY PERSONNEL IN JORDAN. OVER THE YEARS IT WAS CLEAR THAT A COORDINATED APPROACH TO SECURITY IN THE GULF WAS NECESSARY. WHEN JORDAN APPROACHED SAUDI ARABIA ON THIS TOPIC, THE SAUDIS ACKNOWLEDGED THE DESIRABILITY FOR COOPERATION, BUT REPEATEDLY FAILED TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO OPERATE IN CONCERT WITH JORDAN. JORDAN SUBSEQUENTLY DECIDED TO MOVE AHEAD ON ITS OWN. THE MECCA INCIDENT CRITICALLY DRAMATIZED BOTH THE NEED FOR GULF COOPERATION AND THE LIMITATIONS FOR JORDAN ACTING ALONE. THAT'S WHEN WE APPROACHED THE U.S. FOR SUPPORT IN THIS FIELD. WHEN THE ISRAELIS LEAKED THIS TO THE PRESS, IT GOT BLOWN TOTALLY OUT OF PROPORTION.

10. BIN SHAKER CONTINUED THAT JORDAN HAS ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION OF BEING A "CUBA FOR THE UNITED STATES." WE WILL NOT BE U.S. SURROGATES. WHEN WE ACT TOGETHER IT WILL BE IN OUR COMMON INTERESTS. THE LEAK OF THIS STORY MADE IT VERY UNCOMFORTABLE FOR US AND ILLUSTRATES THE PUBLICITY HAZARDS OF TRYING TO DEAL DISCREETLY WITH THE U.S. OUR AIM IS NOT TO GET THE U.S. INVOLVED DIRECTLY IN ANY GULF ACTION BUT MERELY FOR THE U.S. TO PROVIDE US WITH NECESSARY SUPPORT. MR. POWERS ASKED IF THE U.S. IS NOT TO BE INVOLVED DIRECTLY, WHAT MAKES THIS A JOINT PROGRAM. GENERAL BIN SHAKER STATED HE WOULD PREFER IN THE LONG RUN TO USE HIS OWN TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT, BUT FOR NOW WE NEED U.S. TRANSPORTATION AND WE NEED THE COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION GEAR THAT WE CURRENTLY DO NOT HAVE TO SUPPORT OUR TROOPS IF THEY ARE DEPLOYED OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY. IN CONCLUSION, BIN SHAKER STRESSED WE WILL NEVER ASK THE U.S. TO FIGHT FOR US. WE INTEND TO FIGHT OUR OWN BATTLES, BUT WE DO NEED SUPPORT TO GET TO THE BATTLEFIELD, TO IMPROVE OUR COMMAND AND CONTROL CAPABILITIES, AND TO SUPPLEMENT OUR AMMUNITION REQUIREMENTS.

11. THE DELEGATION THEN ADJOURNED TO JOIN THE REST OF THE CODEL FOR THE STANDARD JAF BRIEFING ON THE SYRIAN THREAT TO JORDAN WHICH FOCUSED ON THE GREAT DISPARITIES IN FORCE STRUCTURE AND MILITARY EQUIPMENT LEVELS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. THE SCOPE AND SPEED OF THE SYRIAN BUILDUP WAS ALSO HIGHLIGHTED. A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH LTG BIN SHAKER AS THE PRINCIPAL INTERLOCUTOR FOLLOWED.

- -- IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON SOVIET SS-21 MISSILES IN SYRIA AND THE THREAT FROM SYRIAN FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, BIN SHAKER REPLIED THAT THE SS-21'S ARE LOCATED JUST SOUTH OF DAMASCUS AND COULD STRIKE WITHIN JORDAN BUT NOT REACH AMMAN. THE IMPROVED MIG-21'S ARE A PROBLEM FOR JORDAN'S F-5'S BUT HAD NOT BEEN MUCH OF A PROBLEM FOR THE ISRAELIS BECAUSE THE LATTER HAD F-16'S AS WELL AS HELP FROM THE RADAR TRACKING AND ELECTRONIC JAMMING OF E2C AIRCRAFT.

- -- LTG BIN SHAKER NOTED THAT THE COST OF EQUIPPING THE SYRIAN ARMED FORCES WAS TAXING THE SYRIAN ECONOMY AND HE ESTIMATED THAT THE VALUE OF EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED TO SYRIA SINCE JUNE 1982 WAS MORE THAN 2 BILLION DOLLARS. HOWEVER, HE COULD NOT BE SURE OF THE COST TO THE SYRIANS SINCE THE SOVIETS PROVIDED GRANT AID AND REDUCED PRICES TO THE SYRIANS AS THE USG DOES TO ISRAEL.

- -- SPEAKING OF JAF'S ABILITY TO TRANSPORT ITS FORCES, BIN SHAKER STATED THAT THE RJAF HAD SIX C-130'S WHICH

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PROVIDED VERY LIMITED LIFT CAPABILITY. IN ADDITION, HE HAS ASKED THE NATIONAL AIRLINES (ALIA) TO DESIGNATE ONE 747 FOR MILITARY TRANSPORT. HE COMMENTED THAT ALIA

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HAD TWO 747'S AND 5 TRI-STARS BUT THAT JAF PREFERRED MILITARY AIRCRAFT BECAUSE OF THEIR CAPABILITY TO USE UNIMPROVED LANDING SITES.

- -- IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THREATS AGAINST JORDAN, LTG BIN SHAKER INDICATED THAT ALTHOUGH THE JORDANIANS WERE BETTER TRAINED AND MORE HIGHLY MOTIVATED, THESE FACTORS WOULD NOT BE ADEQUATE TO OVERCOME THE QUANTITY AND SOPHISTICATION OF EQUIPMENT IN THE SYRIAN ARMY. HE STATED THAT THE BULK OF JORDAN'S ARMY WAS STATIONED ALONG THE SYRIAN BORDER AND THE JORDANIANS CAPTURED INFILTRATORS ALMOST DAILY. SYRIA SENT THESE INFILTRATORS TO DESTABILIZE JORDAN BY MEANS OF BOMBS AND ASSASSINATIONS.

- -- MANY OF THE CAPTURED INFILTRATORS CLAIMED TO BE ONLY PASSING THROUGH JORDAN TO ATTACK ISRAEL, BUT BIN SHAKER DID NOT BELIEVE THEM. BESIDES, THE JORDAN VALLEY WAS CRITICAL TO JORDAN'S ECONOMY AND HIS SOLDIERS HAD BEEN GIVEN STRICT ORDERS NOT TO LET ANYONE THROUGH TO ATTACK ISRAEL BECAUSE JORDAN DID NOT WANT THE VALLEY TO BECOME A WAR ZONE. BIN SHAKER IDENTIFIED THE INFILTRATORS AS PALESTINIANS DIRECTED BY SYRIA. HE STATED AMERICAN SENSOR EQUIPMENT WAS HELPING TO LOCATE THE INFILTRATORS AND HE WAS REQUESTING MORE ANTI-INFILTRATION EQUIPMENT FROM THE U.S.

- -- BIN SHAKER STRESSED THAT JORDAN FACED SIGNIFICANT THREATS AND NEEDED AIR DEFENSE EQUIPMENT TO DOUNTER THE ENEMY THREAT. SPECIFICALLY, HE IDENTIFIED HIS PRIORITIES AS F-16 AIRCRAFT, MOBILE HAWK SYSTEMS, AND LOW-LOOKING RADAR.

- -- IN A DISCUSSION OF THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR, BIN SHAKER STATED HE BELIEVED NEITHER SIDE COULD WIN BUT THAT THE WAR WOULD NOT END AS LONG AS KHOMEINI WAS ALIVE. JORDAN SUPPORTED IRAQ BECAUSE IF IRAN WON, THE GULF STATES WOULD BE SERIOUSLY THREATENED AND SAUDI ARABIA WOULD FALL; THIS WOULD BE A GRAVE THREAT TO JORDAN AS WELL AS TO THE ENTIRE WESTERN WORLD. ALTHOUGH IRAQ MADE A MISTAKE BY CROSSING THE BORDER FIRST, THE WAR HAS ACTUALLY STARTED MUCH EARLIER WITH ARTILLERY DUELS AND OTHER MUTUAL ACTS OF WAR. BUT NOW IRAN WILL NOT BE SATISFIED UNTIL THEY OVERTHROW THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT AND PUT SHI'ITES IN CONTROL. BIN SHAKER CONCLUDED THAT IRAQ WAS MORE MODERATE NOW AND JORDAN WANTED THEM TO WIN, BUT THE WAR WAS STALEMATED ON THE GROUND WITH HEAVY CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES.

12. CONGRESSMEN MCHUGH AND LEHMAN HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THIS CABLE. VIETS.

END OF MESSAGE

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